R E P O R T R E S U M E S

ED 017 231 JC 671 009

A STUDY OF PRE-REGISTRATION COUNSELING.

BY- PEARCE, FRANK C.
SAN MATEO COLL., CALIF.

REPORT NUMBER RR-1967-1
EDRS PRICE MF-$0.25 HC-$1.20 28P.

DESCRIPTORS- *JUNIOR COLLEGES, *COUNSELING EFFECTIVENESS, *COUNSELOR ROLE, *SCHOOL REGISTRATION, *STUDENT ATTITUDES, STUDENT OPINION, QUESTIONNAIRES, STUDENT PERSONNEL SERVICES, COUNSELING SERVICES, GUIDANCE PROGRAMS, SAN MATEO, CALIFORNIA,

TO DETERMINE THE VALUE OF PRE-REGISTRATION COUNSELING, THIS STUDY ATTEMPTED TO RATE STUDENT ASSESSMENT OF (1) HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH HIS COUNSELOR, (2) THE APPROPRIATENESS OF HIS CHOICE OF MAJOR, (3) THE SUITABILITY OF HIS SCHEDULE, AND (4) HIS PREPARATION FOR REGISTRATION. SEVEN HUNDRED SIXTY-ONE STUDENTS (8.5 PERCENT OF THE STUDENT BODY) WERE CHOSEN AT RANDOM FROM THOSE WHO REGISTERED BETWEEN THE SECOND AND FOURTH WEEKS. THEY FILLED OUT A QUESTIONNAIRE SHOWING THEIR DEGREE OF SATISFACTION WITH VARIOUS ASPECTS OF RAPPORT, ADVISEMENT, AND COUNSELING. THIRTY-THREE COUNSELORS ALSO FILLED OUT THE QUESTIONNAIRE TO INDICATE THE IMPORTANCE THEY ATTACH TO EACH SEGMENT OF THEIR FUNCTIONS. THE COUNSELORS' RATING OF IMPORTANCE WAS COMPARED WITH STUDENT RANKING OF HOW WELL THE FUNCTIONS WERE CARRIED OUT. STUDENT DEGREES OF SATISFACTION WERE CORRELATED WITH AGE, CHOICE OF MAJOR, DURATION OF COUNSELING SESSION, AND SEVERAL OTHER INFLUENTIAL FACTORS AND, ALTHOUGH FOUND TO VARY CONSIDERABLY, WERE GENERALLY FAVORABLE. THE GREATEST FLAW IN THE PRE-REGISTRATION APPEARED TO BE A SHORTAGE OF TIME FOR THE INTERVIEWS. THE RECOMMENDATIONS, THEREFORE, INCLUDE SEVERAL SUGGESTIONS FOR ALLEVIATING THE FAULT. (HH)

ERIC

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

RESEARCH REPORT
1967-1

ED017231

A STUDY OF PRE-REGISTRATION COUNSELING

UNIVERSITY OF CALIF.
LOS ANGELES

DEC 15 1967

CLEARINGHOUSE FOR
JUNIOR COLLEGE
INFORMATION

Prepared by: Frank C. Pearce

Office of Research
College of San Mateo
San Mateo Junior College District

JC 671 009

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION . . . . . page 1

STUDY PURPOSE . . . . . page 1

OBJECTIVES . . . . . page 2

STUDY LIMITATIONS. . . . . page 2

PROCEDURE . . . . . page 3

FINDINGS

Comparison of Study Group and General Student Body. . . . . page 4

Strong and Weak Points of Pre-registration Counseling. . . . page 5

Rating of Pre-registration Counseling Functions by Counselors and Students . . . . . page 9

Student Comments Regarding Areas of the Pre-registration Counseling Process not Covered by the Questionnaire . . . page 10

Factors Considered in Student Reaction:

Student Satisfaction Based on Age . . . . . page 13

Student Satisfaction Based on Current Status . . . . page 14

Student Satisfaction Based on Certainty about Major . . page 15

Student Satisfaction Based upon Division in which Enrolled. . . . . page 16

Student Satisfaction Based on Week of Registration . . page 17

Student Satisfaction Based on Knowledge of Counseling Activities . . . . . page 18

CONCLUSIONS. . . . . page 20

RECOMMENDATIONS . . . . . page 24

COLLEGE OF SAN MATEO

STUDY OF PRE-REGISTRATION COUNSELING

INTRODUCTION

Prior to enrolling at the College of San Mateo, each student is scheduled to meet with a member of the counseling staff. Following this initial contact a series of meetings with the counselor are held throughout the school year, depending upon the student's need to complete various aspects of his educational planning.

Despite the continuing nature of the counseling process, it is apparent that this first counseling period is very important. That is, the initial counseling session often represents the student's first contact with the college and serves to influence his preliminary impressions of the college. Moreover, this first contact concerns a topic that is and has been of considerable concern to the student, namely, his educational and occupational goals. At the same time, the counselor wants to be of the greatest possible assistance during each and every contact period. In effect, pre-registration counseling is brief, but of critical importance.

STUDY PURPOSE

To assess student satisfaction with the utility of pre-registration counseling. Specifically, does the student feel that pre-registration counseling meets his wants and needs or does he see it as a cursory process of limited value?

OBJECTIVES

Study objectives are a reflection of both student and counselor perceptions of the desired outcome of pre-registration counseling.

1. To determine the extent of student identification of his counselor as an individual who cares and is concerned about the student's welfare, problems, and progress (rapport);

2. To assess student perception of the assistance received in choosing a college major and classes that are commensurate with his past performance, ability, and interest (counseling);

3. To appraise student satisfaction with his schedule and preparation for the registration process (advisement).

STUDY LIMITATIONS

It should be apparent that counseling is an on-going process. It would be unusual for meaningful counseling to result from a single meeting. As a process, it continually builds upon past sessions while simultaneously building for future sessions. Therefore, this study attempts an artificial separation of one segment of that process, and the study results will be confounded with the adequacy of previous student counseling.

Judging the effectiveness of any process is limited by the individual's knowledge of that process. Although a student evaluation may provide considerable insight for improvement, it cannot be the only evaluation. Moreover, whether the evaluator is a student or a staff member, his judgments are subjectively based upon a great variety of feelings, values, and differing frames of reference. Therefore, any attempt at a total study must consider student and staff opinions in addition to some objective means such as the student's behavior. In effect, this study is based upon subjective judgments and it should be extended to include additional criteria before a complete evaluation can be attempted.

It includes only those students who had not completed registration by the end of the second week of registration. Unfortunately, the study was not proposed until the end of the first week, resulting in the exclusion from the study of many of the well organized and experienced continuing students.

PROCEDURE

The population for this study included all students who were completing registration on or after August 25, 1967. From this population a random sample was selected. Randomization was achieved by asking every seventh person who registered to complete a questionnaire. Mechanically, this was accomplished in the Student Center prior to the student's entrance into the actual registration process. In this way feelings about pre-registration counseling were not confounded with the experiences associated with the registration process.

To encourage student cooperation the class cards desired by the student were pulled for him while he completed the questionnaire. In this way a student would not be prevented from taking a class because it had closed while he completed the questionnaire. Moreover, this process actually saved the student some time and allowed him more time to carefully respond to the questions. It took an average of seven minutes to complete the questionnaire with a range of five to fifteen minutes.

Study objectives and items for inclusion in the questionnaire were developed through personal interviews with the counseling staff and students. The specific items for inclusion in the questionnaire were reviewed by various members of the staff to insure clarity and relation to the study objectives. The instrument was pilot tested by administering it to several students and then interviewing each regarding question clarity and validity. In addition, items were included that would provide a measure of response reliability. Finally, ranking of the scale items by counselors provided a comparison of counselor-student agreement on task importance. The instrument used with counselors, however, was not administered until after the pre-registration counseling to eliminate any possible biasing of the results.

FINDINGS

The population for this study was selected at random to eliminate the possibility of a selection bias influencing the results. In this way it was assumed that a small sample would be representative of the College of San Mateo student population. Moreover, if the students selected differed from the student body, that difference would be so small that it could be attributed to chance alone. It was found that 83.9 percent of the students were twenty years old or less, 14.8 percent were between twenty and thirty years old, and 1.3 percent were over thirty. These proportions were very similar to that of the previous fall when 76.3 percent were twenty or less, 18.9 percent were between twenty and thirty, and 5.7 percent were over thirty. As was anticipated because of the time of this study, the proportion of new students in the sample was higher than that found in the general student body. For example, 72.4 percent of the students in the study were new to CSM, while 44.9 percent of the student body of the previous fall were new students. The proportion of returning and transfer students in the study was nearly identical to that of the general student body. Yet, 37.1 percent of the student body were continuing students and only 12.4 percent of the students in the study were continuing students.

Table I. shows that students selected for the study stated majors that were very similar to those of the general student body. In fact, the only significant differences, $p < .01$ based on Yule's Q Association Coefficients, National Opinion Research Center, were in vocational and technical majors. Overall, it was found that students selected for the study and the general student body were present in approximately the same proportions in each of the several majors and fields.

There were 761 students included in the study or 8.5 percent of the total day student body. Based upon the usual statistical techniques for determining the size of an adequate sample, this sample was 134 students more than needed. That is, the size was great enough to allow representative and meaningful comparisons.

TABLE I. MAJORS OF STUDY STUDENTS AND THE GENERAL STUDENT BODY

MAJOR or FIELD	STUDY STUDENTS f	STUDY STUDENTS %	STUDENT BODY f	STUDENT BODY %
Business	132	17.4	1407	19.0
Cosmetology	21	2.7	124	1.7
English	23	3.0	139	1.9
Fine Arts	71	9.3	459	6.2
Foreign Language	18	2.4	53	0.7
Health Occupations	28	3.7	369	5.0
Liberal Arts	89	11.7	618	8.4
Life Sciences	19	2.6	365	4.9
Math-Engineering	33	4.3	492	6.7
Physical Education	16	2.1	127	1.7
Physical Science	7	0.9	77	1.0
Social Science	81	10.6	601	8.3
Technical	42	5.5	905	12.3
Vocational	85	11.1	222	3.0
Undecided	96	12.7	1422	19.2
TOTAL	761	100	7380	100

A summation scale was devised to assess student satisfaction with pre-registration counseling. Based upon a range of 16 to 80 points where dissatisfaction increased as the score increased, it was found that 20.5 percent of the students rated pre-registration counseling as excellent, 35.1 percent as good, 31.0 percent as average, 10.9 percent as poor, and 2.5 percent as terrible. However, this overall rating was not particularly informative until some analysis of specific strong or weak points was undertaken. Table II shows that in the general area of rapport or the establishment of a personal relationship, pre-registration counseling was satisfactory from the student's point of view. Specifically, during pre-registration counseling two-thirds of the students felt that counselors wanted to help and were willing to listen

to what they had to say. Moreover, over one-half of the students felt that they were treated as individuals and not as just another student. One-fourth felt counselors did an adequate job in this regard and one-fifth felt they did poorly on this personal treatment aspect of establishing rapport.

TABLE II. STRONG AND WEAK AREAS IN PRE-REGISTRATION COUNSELING

	Satisfaction Rating					
	GOOD One - Two		AVERAGE Three		POOR Four - Five	
COUNSELING AREAS	F	%	F	%	F	%
Rapport						
Making student feel counselor wants to help	519	68.2	176	23.1	66	8.7
Listening to the student	508	66.7	179	23.5	74	9.8
Interested in the student as an individual	412	54.1	214	28.1	135	17.8
Helping student feel like a person	409	53.7	206	27.1	146	19.3
Counseling						
Reviewing student's academic strong and weak points	267	35.1	200	26.3	294	38.6
Reviewing past performance	309	40.5	225	19.6	227	28.9
Learning student's goals	446	58.6	182	23.9	133	17.5
Knowing courses student needs to reach his goals	406	53.3	198	26.1	157	20.6
Reviewing choice of major	303	39.7	231	30.4	227	29.9
Helping to choose courses	501	65.8	165	21.7	95	12.5
Telling student what classes to take	490	64.3	169	22.2	102	13.5
Advisement						
Helping student fill out class cards	469	61.6	167	22.0	125	16.4
Reviewing classes so student knows what to expect	251	33.1	201	26.4	309	40.5
Making sure student takes right sequence of courses	385	50.7	232	30.5	143	18.8
Helping student decide the number of units to take	417	54.9	216	28.4	127	16.7
Helping student know how to get through registration	333	43.8	262	34.5	165	21.7

In terms of reviewing academic performance as a part of the counseling portion of the scale, it was found that approximately one-third of the students felt the counselors did a good job and one-third felt the counselors did a poor job. Approximately one-half of the students felt that the counselors did a good job of learning about the student's goals as well as knowing what courses the student would need to reach his goal. On the other hand, one in five students felt the counselors did a poor job in this regard. It was noted that approximately 70 percent of the students felt the counselors did an average or better job of reviewing the student's choice of major while 30 percent considered this aspect of counseling to be poorly conducted.

The last aspect of counseling on the summation scale has to do with helping students choose classes rather than telling them what classes to take. It was found, however, that these two questions failed to be differentiated by the students. The distinction apparently escaped most students as two-thirds felt counselors did a good job in both regards.

The portion of the scale shown in Table II that was intended to reflect the advisement process in pre-registration counseling indicated that two-thirds of the students felt that counselors *did a good job* of helping them to complete their class cards (nearly the same proportion as that shown for choosing courses). Students were somewhat more negative about counselors helping to decide how many units to take or in making sure the student took the right sequence of courses. Less than one-half of the students felt the counselors gave them adequate assistance on how to get through registration. Moreover, only one-third of the students felt counselors had reviewed the courses the student was going to take well enough to give advice on what to expect. In fact, 40.5 percent felt counselors did a poor job in this regard. Generally, it would appear that students perceive advisement as the weakest counselor function, preceded by counseling and establishing rapport.

Another approach used in the study to assess rapport was the group of questions regarding whom students would contact if presented with certain types of problems. For example, students were asked whom they would contact if they wanted to change their college major. It was found that 570, or 75 percent, said they would contact a counselor and another 11.3 percent named a

specific counselor they would contact. Five students indicated they would talk to a teacher, eighteen said they would decide themselves (2.4 percent) while 27 or 3.5 percent indicated friends, family, or the registrar. No response was given by 7.1 percent of the students.

If students were doing failing work, 324 or 42.6 percent said they would see the teacher, and 43 percent would see a counselor. If they were undecided about taking an evening class, 74.1 percent indicated they would go to a counselor and 12.6 percent made no response. Essentially, it would appear that most students would seek the assistance of a counselor if faced with such problems. At the same time, students generally failed to name a specific counselor even though each had just seen his counselor.

Student satisfaction, as measured by this scale, could be expected to vary each time the student responded to the questionnaire. However, a computation of standard errors on each of the scale items indicated a 95 percent probability that the same finding would result. In effect, the variation in responses to individual items would be minimal. This was also reflected in the internal consistency of the scale. For example, responses on questions concerning interest in the student as an individual or those that referred to trying to help a student feel like a person should elicit the same response strength. Paired items included in the schedule and the scale were found to be significantly correlated at the .01 level of confidence. In this instance the proportion of responses was nearly identical. Moreover, in terms of reliability a coefficient of .96 was obtained.

In examining these findings one was immediately confronted with the question of what importance counselors, themselves, attached to each of these aspects of pre-registration counseling. Essentially, this was a question of how satisfied students were with those aspects counselors felt were most important. Thirty-three counselors provided completed rankings for a 67 percent return. Several counselors pointed out that many of these aspects, if not all, were nearly equal in importance and ranking did not provide a meaningful order. Based upon this rationale the various aspects were grouped according to counselor perception of importance rather than individually.

Table III. shows that counselors seemed to feel that "helping students feel that I am here to help them" and "finding out what a student's goals are--what he wants to do" were the two most important functions. Students agreed in terms of satisfaction by rating the first function the most satisfactorily performed, but they rated the second function in the sixth position.

TABLE III.

A COMPARISON OF THE IMPORTANCE COUNSELORS ATTACH TO PRE-REGISTRATION FUNCTIONS AND STUDENT SATISFACTION WITH COUNSELOR PERFORMANCE OF EACH FUNCTION

	Counselor Importance		Student Satisfaction	
FUNCTIONS	Raw Score	Rank	Raw Score	Rank
Helping students feel that I am here to help them	112	1	1568	1
Finding out what his goals are and what he wants to do	113	2	1810	6
Listening to what the student says	127	3	1621	2
Helping him feel I am interested in him as an individual	134	4	1838	8
Helping him feel like a person and not just another student	172	5	1876	9
Reviewing his academic strong and weak points with him	215	6	2344	15
Helping him choose the courses he needs	226	7	1642	3
Reviewing his past performance with him	227	8	2159	13
Knowing what courses he needs to reach his goal	227	8	1897	10
Reviewing his choice of college majors with him	242	10	2209	14
Helping him decide how many units of credit to take	280	11	1830	7
Making sure that he takes the right sequence of courses	296	12	1914	11
Going over his classes with him so he will know what to expect	352	13	2378	16
Telling him what classes he should take	365	14	1694	4
Helping him to know how to get through registration	377	15	2043	12
Helping him to fill out his class cards properly	422	16	1731	5

Counselors placed five functions in the third most important group. Specifically, counselors ranked reviewing academic strong and weak points sixth in importance while student satisfaction in this regard ranked fifteenth. A similar disparity was noted in the function of helping students choose the courses they needed, which counselors ranked seventh in importance and students ranked third. Tied at the eighth position, according to counselors, were reviewing the student's past performance and knowing the courses a student needed to reach his goal, which students ranked thirteenth and tenth. The final function in this group, reviewing choice of college major, was ranked tenth by counselors in terms of importance and fourteenth in terms of satisfaction by the students. Generally, it would appear that the items related to counseling were considered more important to counselors than the degree of satisfaction related by the students in regard to counseling efforts.

Counselors tended to consider functions regarding units and course sequences to be among the less important functions. Correspondingly, student satisfaction with how well counselors performed these functions also decreased. In fact, this finding was repeated for the last four functions shown in Table III. The apparent difference in terms of telling students what classes to take seemed to reflect the inability of this item to discriminate. At the same time, it was apparent that students felt counselors did a good job of "telling them what courses to take," although such a practice is not always considered desirable from a counseling point of view. The other discrepancy of filling out class cards indicated that although counselors saw this function as the least important of all, students were satisfied with what was being done. Essentially, counselors gave advisement the lowest rating and students expressed relatively low degree of satisfaction with how well the advisement function was being accomplished.

Another approach to the question of strong or weak points in the pre-registration counseling process was assessed through direct questions of an open-ended nature. For example, students were asked to describe that feature which gave them the greatest satisfaction. Many students repeated the same functions described in the scale, but several made one or more remarks about what they considered to be outstanding features of their pre-registration counseling session. The warmth, patience and courtesy of the counselor were

the most impressive features to 110 students. The statements in this regard clearly reflect the "unconditional positive regard" advocated by Rogers. * This was also suggested by students who said, ". . . when he told me I could come back to see him whenever I needed help." Moreover, the establishment of rapport was evident in the remarks of 16 students who found that being treated as adults was the most satisfying feature of their encounter.

It should be noted that the numbers used in this regard were actually representative of a much larger population, the general student body. Thus, the 110 students reported above actually represent some 12 percent of the student body or 1080 students. Obviously, this notation also applies to all other figures reported in this study since the sample was considered representative of the study body.

Remarks relating to the general counseling function were fewer in number but they did stress several aspects that could merit consideration by all counselors. For example, 57 students were most impressed with the counselors' knowledge about requirements, majors, teachers, and so on. As one student put it, ". . . he seemed to know what he was talking about." In a similar vein, the supportive role evident to 39 students by counselors who were able to tell them what to do was very satisfying. Another satisfying experience for 37 students was the counselors' patience in helping them to feel they were all set for college. It was found that 21 students were most appreciative of the counselors' frank and honest approach to helping them learn what was expected of them. In addition, four students commented on the reward aspect provided by counselors in recognizing their past efforts.

A variety of remarks in the general area of advisement also identified additional areas of satisfaction to students. The assistance counselors gave the student in getting the desired classes was mentioned by 69 students. Thirty-seven students were pleased to learn the specific courses they would need in their major in order to transfer. When they talked to their counselors, another aspect of the advisement process that 25 students considered outstanding was the help they received in getting a schedule that allowed them to work or meet other needs of their personal lives. Fourteen students were relieved to learn that some of the courses they wanted were

* Carl W. Rogers, author of Client-Centered Therapy, Boston: Houghton-Mifflin

still open, while three were pleased to learn about the variety of courses that were available.

General satisfaction among 140 students was so great that they pointed out the pre-registration counseling process should be left as it is, without any changes. This did not mean that comments suggesting satisfaction were common to all students. In fact, 439 negative responses were recorded while 672 positive responses were recorded.

When students were asked to suggest ways of changing the process to be more effective, 89 pointed to the need for more discussion and more time, in general, with their counselors. Although many students recognized that counselors were busy and relatively few in number, they simply did not feel there was enough time. Another 59 students felt that counseling needed to be more personalized with more emphasis on an individual approach to the needs of each student. In fact, several of these students suggested the need for talking with students rather than telling them what to do.

The need to notify students of closed classes before the counseling session took place was noted by 40 students. Moreover, 38 students felt that counseling sessions should begin sooner, such as, during the previous spring or summer. Twenty-four students felt more attention should be given to telling them how to get through registration, while another 24 felt more discussion about the courses would be helpful. In fact, 20 students asked that more advance information be provided. In a similar vein, 19 students felt that counselors should know about the student's past performance and background before they meet with the student.

Twelve students felt the process could be improved if the waiting time could be reduced and if the counselors were not late. Ten students felt that some other order for scheduling should be considered to determine which student is counseled first: the better high school students, veterans, first to complete the entrance tests, people who work; or if the scheduling were to be done by alphabetical order, the reverse order could be used occasionally. In addition, 28 students made comments such as: provide a new-student orientation before counseling;

have the clerical people be more helpful and courteous; students should come prepared knowing what they want; be more flexible in making appointments; freshmen should be given more direction with a tighter schedule; and students should come in for counseling only if they want to do so. Finally, 13 students suggested that registration by mail, computer, or by some other method should be attempted. Others pointed out that counseling was a full-time job requiring a great deal of knowledge and skill. Therefore, full-time counselors should be available. Still others suggested that second-year students be asked to help new students register, while a final group pointed out that having all counselors in one centrally located area would be helpful.

Up to this point the degree of satisfaction of students on an overall basis or in terms of specific aspects of the pre-registration process has been explored. The next logical question in such an analysis was what factors, if any, contribute to some students being satisfied and others not being satisfied. For example, does the younger student tend to be less satisfied than the older student? Table IV. shows that the proportion of students who considered the counseling excellent increased as age increased.

TABLE IV.

THE INFLUENCE OF AGE ON STUDENT SATISFACTION WITH THE COUNSELING PROCESS

DEGREE OF SATISFACTION	STUDENT AGE: 19 and under		20 - 26		27 and over	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Excellent	104	17.7	40	27.0	12	50.0
Good	218	37.1	42	28.4	7	29.2
Average	185	31.5	46	31.1	5	20.8
Poor	69	11.7	13	8.8	-	-
Very Poor	12	2.0	7	4.7	-	-
Total	588	100	148	100	24	100

On the other hand, the proportion of students who considered the process good increased as age decreased. This distinction was not as clear for students who rated the process average or poor, but the proportions did tend to increase as age decreased. In fact, a simple cross totaling of Table IV shows that students tended to rate the process as good, average, or poor when they were nineteen or under but as excellent or very poor when twenty or more. Essentially, it would appear that the student who is twenty or more years old will tend to be more critical (positive or negative) of the process than a younger student.

The student's status was also considered a factor that could differentiate those students who were or were not satisfied with the process. It was found that new students were 10 to 15 percent less likely to rate the process as excellent than they were to give it any other rating. Continuing students were evenly divided among the ratings with a slight tendency (5 percent) to favor an excellent rating, while transfer and returning students were evenly divided among the ratings. Table V also shows that the probability of any of the different types of students rating the counseling process as either good, average, poor, or very poor was almost the same. Perhaps the new student had higher expectations than other students or he was more conservative in rating practices, but he tended to find counseling less satisfying than did the other students.

TABLE V

THE INFLUENCE OF CURRENT STATUS ON STUDENT SATISFACTION WITH COUNSELING

DEGREE OF SATISFACTION	CURRENT STATUS: NEW		CONTINUING		TRANSFER		RETURNING	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Excellent	100	18.2	26	27.7	12	29.3	18	24.3
Good	200	36.3	30	31.9	14	34.1	23	31.1
Average	173	31.4	29	30.9	12	29.3	22	29.7
Poor	64	11.6	7	7.4	3	7.3	8	10.8
Very Poor	14	2.5	2	2.1	--	--	3	4.1
Total	551	100	94	100	41	100	74	100

Another potential difference considered in this study was the degree of certainty students had about their current major or selection of courses. For example, the student who had already decided on a major when he went to see his counselor might find the session more satisfying than one who had not decided on a major. Table VI shows that students who rated counseling as excellent tended to be the more certain about their majors. In fact, the proportion of students who were certain about their majors and considered the process excellent was nearly twice that of students who might change, had not selected, or had not considered a major and rated counseling excellent. Moreover, those who rated the counseling process as poor tended not even to have considered a major, while the probability of their rating the process as good was one-third less than the other students. At the same time, such students also tended to rate the process as average more often than did those who were certain about their majors.

TABLE VI.

STUDENT SATISFACTION ACCORDING TO HOW FIRMLY HE HAD DECIDED UPON A GIVEN MAJOR

	CERTAINTY ABOUT CURRENT MAJOR							
	CERTAIN		MIGHT CHANGE		NONE SELECTED		NONE CONSIDERED	
DEGREE OF SATISFACTION	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Excellent	108	26.0	22	14.2	20	13.3	6	14.6
Good	138	33.3	63	40.7	58	38.7	9	22.0
Average	122	29.4	49	31.6	49	32.7	16	39.0
Poor	36	8.7	16	10.3	21	14.0	9	22.0
Very Poor	11	2.6	5	3.2	2	1.3	1	2.4
Total	415	100	155	100	150	100	41	100

Findings concerning the number of classes a student had selected prior to meeting with his counselor were the same for students who rated the process excellent as they were for students who rated the process average or poor. For example, 26.9 percent of the students who rated counseling excellent

had chosen all of their classes before meeting with the counselor, while 17.9 percent of those who had selected none of their classes prior to meeting with the counselor rated counseling excellent. Moreover, 28.2 percent of those students who rated counseling average had selected classes, while 41.0 percent of those who had selected none of their classes rated the process average. Essentially, the same trend as that noted for majors was present but it was not as evident, or as some would say, "The differences were not significant."

Additional analysis of the difference among students with various majors was explored in Table VII.

TABLE VII.

VARIATIONS IN STUDENT SATISFACTION ACCORDING TO MAJOR-DIVISION

	Good or Better		Average		Poor or Worse		Total
DIVISIONS-MAJORS	f	%	f	%	f	%	f
Business	86	65.2	35	26.5	11	8.3	132
Cosmetology	12	57.1	8	38.1	1	4.8	21
English	12	52.2	10	43.5	1	4.3	23
Fine Arts	34	47.9	24	33.8	13	18.3	71
Foreign Language	7	38.9	7	38.9	4	22.2	18
Health	18	64.3	6	21.4	4	14.3	28
Liberal Arts	47	52.8	31	34.8	11	12.4	89
Life Sciences	11	57.9	6	31.6	2	10.5	19
Math-Engineering	23	69.7	8	24.2	2	6.1	33
Physical Education	6	37.5	5	31.3	5	31.2	16
Physical Sciences	5	71.4	2	28.6	-	--	7
Social Sciences	46	56.8	23	28.4	12	14.8	81
Technician	24	57.2	9	21.4	9	21.4	42
Vocational	48	56.5	27	31.8	10	11.7	85
Undecided	45	46.9	34	35.4	17	17.7	96

It was found that students who majored in the Physical Sciences, Math-Engineering, Business, and the Health Occupations found the pre-registration counseling process to be somewhat more satisfactory than did students with other majors. At the same time, Physical Education, Foreign Languages, Technician and Fine Arts majors appeared to find the process the least satisfactory. Median satisfaction ratings in each major division were: Business - good, Cosmetology - excellent, English - average, Health - good, Fine Arts - average, Foreign Languages - average, Liberal Arts - average, Life Science - good, Math-Engineering - good, Physical Education - average to poor, Physical Science - good, Social Science - good, Technician - good, Vocational - good, and undecided - good to average.

The particular week a student might register was studied as another means of differentiating the satisfied and the dissatisfied students. As anticipated, the student who registered during the second week found the process more to his liking than the student who registered during the fourth week. Specifically, 35.9 percent of the students who registered during the second week rated the process good, while only 25.8 percent of those who registered during the fourth week rated the process good. It was also shown in the findings that 18.3 percent of the poor ratings occurred during the second week, 22.0 percent during the third week, and 59.7 percent during the fourth week. However, even among the registrants of the fourth week 46.4 percent rated the counseling process good or better while 20.5 percent rated it poor or worse.

Earlier findings in this study clearly indicate the importance of rapport as seen by both counselors and students. In view of this apparent importance, students were asked what action they would take if faced with a decision that could require outside assistance--when changing majors, failing a class, or taking a class in the Evening College. Table VIII shows that the likelihood of a student seeking the assistance of a counselor increased as the student's satisfaction with the pre-registration counseling process increased. At the same time, the probability of a student deciding himself, asking a teacher, friend, or someone else increased as his satisfaction with the process decreased. This would emphasize the importance of the initial contact with the counseling process on the student's subsequent use of those services. It would appear that the student who does not perceive this initial contact to be

satisfactory would also be the student who would not seek out the counselor in the future.

TABLE VIII.

STUDENT SATISFACTION

ACCORDING TO WHOM THEY WOULD ASK FOR HELP IN SOLVING AN ACADEMIC PROBLEM

DEGREE OF SATISFACTION	INDIVIDUAL ASKED FOR HELP								
	COUNSELOR		TEACHER		SELF		OTHERS		TOTAL
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f
Excellent	362	83.5	54	12.4	7	1.6	11	2.5	434
Good	592	78.1	124	16.3	17	2.2	26	3.4	759
Average	432	69.7	123	19.9	35	5.7	29	4.7	619
Poor	86	53.4	47	29.2	15	9.3	13	8.1	161
Very Poor	30	58.8	13	25.5	6	11.8	2	3.9	51

A rather simple reflection of the rapport between counselor and student was evidenced in the question that assessed whether the student appeared to know the counselor's name or office in the event a return visit might be needed. It was found that only 11.3 percent of the students either elected to or were able to provide the counselor's name. However, 94.4 percent claimed they knew their counselor's name and were able at least to name the building where he could be found. On the other hand, 65.9 percent of the students felt that the counselor knew their names, 18.5 percent were undecided, and 15.6 percent felt that he did not know the student's name. These findings were clearly reflected in the student's satisfaction with the pre-registration counseling process in that satisfaction increased when the student knew the counselor's name or felt the counselor knew his name. Conversely, student satisfaction decreased as the probability that the counselor knew the student's name decreased.

The amount of time available for counseling any student was limited during the period of this study. Normally, a fifteen-minute session could be expected, with some variations depending upon prior commitments and the needs of a particular student. The possibility that length of time spent with a counselor would influence student satisfaction was explored and the findings are indicated in Table IX. It was found that the probability of an excellent or good rating increased as the time spent with the counselor increased.

TABLE IX.

STUDENT SATISFACTION

RELATED TO AMOUNT OF TIME DEVOTED TO THE COUNSELING SESSION

MINUTES SPENT WITH COUNSELOR	Satisfaction Rating: Excellent f	%	Good f	%	Average f	%	Poor f	%	Very Poor f	%
10 or less	16	10.3	23	8.6	45	19.1	24	29.3	9	47.4
11 - 20	55	35.2	124	46.2	108	45.8	34	41.5	9	47.4
21 - 30	51	32.7	79	29.5	59	25.0	16	19.5	-	--
31 or more	34	21.8	42	15.7	24	10.1	8	9.7	1	5.2
Total	156	100	268	100	236	100	82	100	19	100

On the other hand, average, poor, or very poor ratings tended to increase as the time spent with the counselor decreased. The proportion of students who spent ten minutes or less in counseling and rated the process as very poor was five times that of the students who rated the process good or excellent. Students who spent thirty-one minutes or more in counseling were four times as likely to rate the process excellent as they were to rate it very poor.

These findings were directly related to some of the comments students made about the pre-registration counseling process. For example, the student who saw the counselor as "quick" tended to rate the process average to poor; but none of the students who were impressed with the counselor's knowledge rated the process poor or very poor. Those who perceived the counselor as warm, patient, or friendly were the most likely to give the process an excellent rating, as were those who were appreciative of the support the counselor had provided or those who were encouraged to return whenever they felt they needed help. Students who were unsure of themselves or their goals tended to be very negative in their ratings.

CONCLUSIONS

1. That the pre-registration counseling process is considered good to excellent by the majority of the students (55 percent). In fact, one in five see the process as needing no improvements. A relatively small proportion (13 percent) consider the total process as poor or worse, and approximately one-third give it an average rating. Essentially, one half of the students consider pre-registration counseling more than adequate, and one-half see it as adequate or less than adequate.

2. That satisfaction among students with how well a particular aspect of the pre-registration counseling process is being carried out cannot be equated with the degree of importance students attach to that aspect of the process. A student may consider some aspect of the process poorly performed and yet, see the task as so unimportant that the poor performance is meaningless to him. Thus, these findings simply stress student satisfaction while the question of importance is assessed by the counselor.

3. That the establishment of rapport between student and counselor is of primary importance, according to counselors, while CSM students rate counselor performance in this regard as satisfactory.

Counselor performance in listening to the student and giving him a feeling that he wants to help is very well regarded, while individual treatment is seen by students as the area within rapport that is in greatest need of improvement.

4. That the counseling function of the pre-registration counseling process is considered by most counselors as the second most important function they perform. Student satisfaction with the performance of this function by counselors is generally considered adequate. Specifically, students do not distinguish between receiving help in choosing their classes and being told what classes to take. In fact, they consider both of these approaches to counseling well performed. From a counseling point of view, however, both approaches usually would not be considered satisfactory. Students are not satisfied with the counselor's performance in reviewing a student's academic strong and weak points, choice of major, or past performance. It would appear that students see counselors as doing a good job of going from the general (goals) to the specific (courses) during counseling, but they are doing an inadequate job of relating this to the individual characteristics (performance or major selected) of the student.

5. That many counselors see the functions of rapport, counseling, and advisement during pre-registration counseling as nearly equal in importance. Thus, the distinctions shown in this study may be more apparent than real. For example, advisement resides in the third position of importance according to counselors and satisfactory performance according to students, but the overall rating by both groups is nearly identical to that found for the counseling function. Students were not satisfied with the counselors' performance in helping them to know what to expect from their classes, but counselors do not consider this a very important part of the process. On the other hand, students feel they receive satisfactory help in filling out their class cards, and counselors see this as a very unimportant part of their job. It should be pointed out also that

students were not satisfied with the help they received on how to get through registration.

6. That many students do not readily perceive a specific counselor as the individual they would contact to assist them in solving some academic problem. That is not to say they do not see counselors as a ready source of such assistance. Instead, the establishment of the personal relationship between student and counselor is not developed sufficiently following this pre-registration counseling session for most students to think in terms of a particular counselor to help them solve some academic problem.

7. That the elements of pre-registration counseling which promote satisfaction with the process among students go beyond the items included in the scale used in this study. For example, satisfactory rapport is evident when the student perceives the counselor as warm, patient, or courteous; it is also evident to students who feel they have been treated as adults or when they have been extended an invitation to return whenever they need help. A high degree of satisfaction also results when the student hears concrete evidence of the counselor's knowledge about requirements, majors, or teachers. Obviously, the counselor who is able to help a student get the classes or schedule he desires is very able to promote student satisfaction.

8. That there are a number of ways in which pre-registration counseling could be changed to increase student satisfaction with the process. Several aspects that individual counselors might consider are specified in the findings. All such suggestions, however, should be viewed from the context that students know the amount of time available and the number of counselors available are limited. Some of the suggestions for improvement are: allow more time for dialogue, give notice to students of closed classes before they meet with their counselors, employ only full-time counselors

because specific knowledge and skill are required, make the process more personalized, start counseling during the spring, summer, or during high school; register by mail or computer, ask the second-year students to help with the registration of new students, have counselors located in one central area. Most of these comments relate to the same central issue--how to have more time to meet with the counselor. Even among those students who rated the process good or excellent, it was not uncommon to see a statement such as: "Considering how many students there are and how little time there is to talk to each of us, I think they do a wonderful job." It is apparent that devoting more time to the pre-registration process could help to solve problems stemming from the impersonalization of a large institution or the need for more support from the counselor. At the same time, however, the need to strengthen specific aspects of the functions related to rapport, counseling, and advisement may not be resolved by time alone. The findings suggest that attention to the further development of skills and attainment of knowledge could be warranted.

10. That a student who is twenty or more years old will tend to have a more critical perspective of the pre-registration counseling process than will a younger student. Moreover, a new student will be less likely to rate the process excellent. Apparently young students (19 or less) and new students are either more conservative or moderate in their ratings, or their expectations approach a more ideal level, resulting in a mid-range of ratings.

11. That the more thought a student has given to the major he will pursue in college, the more likely he is to find pre-registration counseling a satisfactory process. This would suggest that any effort which might assist the student to consider actively what he expects from college could result in a more satisfactory feeling about the procedures he encounters in college. In fact, a goal directed (major decided) student could find his total college educational experience more rewarding.

Such a conclusion is closely related to the need expressed by students for more time with counselors.

12. That students in some majors or divisions appear to find the pre-registration counseling process less satisfactory than students in other majors or divisions. However, the absolute numbers in such majors are so small, the degrees of freedom so limited, that the addition of one or two persons to a given category can change the findings dramatically. Therefore, generalizations about any given group cannot be drawn. The findings suggest that real differences do exist in the divisions of Physical Education, Foreign Languages, Technician, and Fine Arts. Apparently, students from these divisions find pre-registration less satisfactory than students from other divisions.

13. That students who know their counselors by name or think they know the names are more prone to rate the pre-registration counseling process as good or excellent than those who are not on a name basis. Moreover, the amount of time a counselor is able to spend with the student is directly related to the degree of satisfaction expressed by the student. Finally, it can be anticipated that as rapport with the individual student is enhanced, his satisfaction with the process will be considerably improved.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based upon the findings reported in this study, it is apparent that the resolution of a central issue will do much to enhance student satisfaction with the pre-registration counseling process. That issue may be expressed through the use of a single word--time. Therefore, it is recommended that:

1. The counseling staff should carefully explore means whereby coordination between high school and college counseling can

be improved. It is apparent that at least one-fourth of the CSM students have not faced decisions directly regarding what they expect from college. Thus, when a clear goal has not been identified, the initial college counseling contact is too brief and too shallow.

2. The pre-registration counseling process should emphasize the advisement and rapport functions while emphasizing the counseling function during another time period. Moreover, the advisability of reducing the time spent with the continuing student should be considered.

3. The use of a brief counseling orientation program for new students should be considered during the preceding spring or summer. At the same time, the use of pre-registration counseling sessions for continuing students during the spring or summer may allow the elimination of such a session for continuing students during the fall.

4. The use of computerized registration should be studied to delimit the most feasible approach for using such a procedure in the San Mateo Junior College District. Moreover, a target date to accomplish such a process should be established immediately. This in turn would have immediate implications for modifications in the pre-registration counseling process.

5. The counseling staff should give immediate attention to the development of one or more in-service training sessions. Such sessions could be devoted to the discussion of methods and techniques for achieving more effectively those aspects of the functions concerning rapport, counseling, and advisement where the need for improvement was noted. It is also suggested that meetings among counselors devoted to a discussion of what should be accomplished during pre-registration counseling would be of value in identifying common

goals. Additional sessions could be devoted to a consideration of what changes, if any, of those suggested might be implemented to improve the process. Essentially, it would seem there is much to recommend current practices, but the need to discuss and consider alternatives for making improvements is clearly warranted.